

CELEBRATING THE APPLE II



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II ALIVE

CELEBRATING THE APPLE II

A TALE OF ONE CITY

REPORT FROM KANSASFEST 94



**ANNOUNCING
APPLEWORKS 5.0**

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THAT HAD TO BE: PART 2**

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PART 2**

A Tale of One City



By Jerry Kindall

Many of you are already familiar with the annual conference, held during the third week of July in Kansas City, known popularly as KansasFest. Last year, the company that sponsored the conference was Tom Weishaar's Resource Central. This year, Resource Central is dissolving and making way for ICON, the International Computer Owner's Network, a non-profit corporation founded by Weishaar and dedicated to helping users of all computer platforms (yes, even Macintoshes and PCs) get more out of their machines. Accordingly, the official name of the conference has been changed to ICONference—the fourth name change in the conference's six-year history—but, of course, that hasn't stopped everyone from calling it KansasFest, despite the fact that the name alludes to a trade show that no longer even exists (AppleFest) which KansasFest never really resembled. Furthermore, the conference is held in Kansas City, Missouri, not Kansas City, Kansas.

Computer owners, unlike their machines, simply are not strictly logical. If I didn't know this already, I know it now, after trying to explain to non-Apple people (among them my non-computer friends and relatives) why it's called "KansasFest." It just is, OK?

During the past few years, the conference was held at the National Office Machines Dealers Association (NOMDA) conference center, with attendees having the option of inexpensive accommodations at nearby Avila College (a small Catholic school). This year, the conference was held entirely on Avila's campus once again, just as it was in its early days. The attendees were mainly Apple II users, although many had augmented their Apple IIs with Macintoshes or PCs. Laptops, such as PowerBooks, were particularly popular—I even spotted Apple II historian Steve Weyhrich pounding away on a Tandy 100, a close spiritual cousin of the Apple II. (Like the Apple II, the T100 is an orphaned computer with a loyal and enthusiastic user base.)

What's the attraction of KansasFest? Well, there are hour-long seminars on various topics, but mainly, it's an opportunity for nerds to socialize with others of their own kind. (And I'm using the term "nerd" here in the most complimentary way possible to describe someone who's into computers as a lifestyle—it's a badge I wear with pride.) At KansasFest, Apple II celebrities like Roger Wagner, Mike Westerfield, and, of course, Tom Weishaar himself mingle with ordinary folks.

The seminar topics ranged from a demonstration of Windows 4 (an event which marks Microsoft's first participation in the conference) to a demonstration of a full-fledged 3D modeling and animation program for the Apple IIGs (Michael Lutynski's *Animasia 3-D*). More on the sessions later, but first, I feel the urge to wax nostalgic for a paragraph or four.

Flashback

Six years ago, at the first KansasFest, I was just one of the nerd herd. I'd written a program

called *MicroDot* for Kitchen Sink Software, and Ross Lambert, then publisher of three fine Apple II programming newsletters, gave me a five-minute piece of his session on 8-bit development environments to demonstrate my program. I found myself sitting next to Alan Bird (the author of the Beagle Compiler, TimeOut, Program Writer, and later InWords and Pointless), Mike Westerfield (owner of the Byte Works), and Roger Wagner (who needs no introduction) at the front of the room.

All these guys were idols of mine, and there I was sitting next to them. Alan Bird even looked at my nametag and said something like, "Oh, you wrote that *MicroDot* thing." Taken completely by surprise, I nevertheless managed to stammer something incoherent but affirmative. (If he remembers me at all, he probably remembers me as an idiot who couldn't put together a simple sentence.) I was seriously over-prepared for my five-minute session—I'd made a set of computer slides and written out all my remarks. I managed to get through it without too much stress, then fell back into my seat and managed to avoid staring at Bird, Westerfield, and Wagner too much.

Other gosh-wow highlights of that first conference include the moment when Roger Wagner told me he'd liked my presentation; sitting next to Mike Westerfield on the van ride from the airport and thinking, "What a coincidence, this guy sure looks a lot like Mike Westerfield"—I'd seen his picture in *Nibble*—and last but not least, accidentally stealing Randy Brandt's seat at the TimeOut programming session. (I was mortified when I realized what I'd done. Randy and I have, of course, met many times since then, and I now consider him a friend.)

Of course, I quickly learned that most of these guys were a lot like me—completely addicted to the Apple II, and willing to talk about them all day and all night, stopping occasionally to consume junk food and to recharge their batteries with a few hours of sleep. While some were very different from me in many other ways, the Apple II gave us a frame of reference, a set of common experiences that had shaped our lives in one way or another, and something to fall back on when conversation failed. I met all kinds of people—including some people I might have run away from in panic if I'd encountered them on the street—and discovered that the Apple II was a powerful and liberating social force in addition to being a really neat computer.

KansasFest 1994

Snapping back to 1994... At the sixth KansasFest, as with previous 'Fests, most attendees arrived Wednesday evening and promptly spent the night getting no sleep. (Although the registration form for the conference has a checkbox to indicate whether you plan on sleeping during the conference—so that the organizers can put you in a dorm room next to others with similar preferences—you really should not stay in the Avila dorms if you want to leave KansasFest a refreshed and alert person.)

What's the attraction of KansasFest? Well, there are hour-long seminars on various topics, but mainly, it's an opportunity for nerds to socialize with others of their own kind. (And I'm using the term "nerd" here in the most complimentary way possible to describe someone who's into computers as a lifestyle—it's a badge I wear with pride.) At KansasFest, Apple II celebrities like Roger Wagner, Mike Westerfield, and, of course, Tom Weishaar himself mingle with ordinary folks.

Being, as it was, the night before the conference actually started, it was mainly an evening of cruising the dorms to see who was there and greeting people you hadn't seen for a year (or had only met electronically). Ellen Rosenberg, former managing editor of this very publication, stopped by my lair to say hello, as did contributing editor Doug Cuff, who I'd never met in person.

The next morning, the conference got under way with a brief "welcome" speech from Tom Weishaar, in which he read jokes from his subscriber comment cards and generally got us into a festive mood. Then the sessions began. The sessions were held in two tracks—that is, two sessions were held at the same time in different rooms. For the most part they were organized so that the intended audiences for competing sessions overlapped as little as possible, but there were still times when I was torn between two equally interesting topics. An integral part of KansasFest, it seems, is standing in the hallway trying to decide which session you want to attend, and doing so in the minutes before the sessions are due to start.

I chose to attend Jim Maricondo's Internet presentation, which served as a decent introduction to the Internet, and touched briefly on the basic facilities of the Internet—mail, news, ftp, gopher, telnet, and their ilk. (You'll be reading about those in the next issue of *II Alive*.) Dave Ciotti's soldering session, I heard, was also informative for budding hardware-heads.

The Mensch Computer

After the first hour, the two tracks of conferences merged for Dr. William Mensch's introduction of his new machine. Mensch, as you may know, is the designer of the 65C02 and 65816 microprocessors used in the Apple II line. (He also had a hand in the design of the original 6502, but the 65C02 was the first processor that Mensch was solely responsible for.) A few years ago at KansasFest, Mensch created quite a stir by saying that Apple was the main reason there weren't faster 65816 microprocessors—if there were a demand, Mensch said, he'd make the chips. He also mentioned he was working on a 32-bit version of the 65816 architecture. "Am I coming on too strong?" he asked the room full of enthusiastic Apple II developers.

This year saw a toned-down Mensch rolling out a product of his own. His new computer, based on a chip called the 65265S (which is basically a 65816 with built-in RAM, ROM, and serial ports on one chip), is called the Mensch Computer. The Mensch Computer features an extremely small CPU box with a compact yet full-size keyboard, a Flash RAM cartridge port (which will accept the PCMIA memory cards used by the Newton

and many laptops), and a stand-alone 40-column by 16-line LCD screen. (Hide the CPU box under the table and the computer looks like it's just the keyboard and the very thin display screen.) It can run on batteries. The main circuit board is about the size of a half-sheet of notebook paper, and could easily be further condensed (there was a lot of empty space on the board). Since the microprocessor is at heart a 65816, Mensch figured that a crowd of Apple II programmers might be a good source of software—much the way some IIGS programmers have crossed over to Super Nintendo programming, since the game machine also uses a 65816 processor.

Unfortunately, most of the crowd seemed to miss the point. "Can it run Apple II software?" No. "Why not?" Apple didn't make the technology available. "Well, Laser has been licensing its ROMs, have you talked to them?" Real-

So what's the Mensch Computer for? Mensch envisions it as a platform for all sorts of home applications. With appropriate software, it would make a pretty nice Internet front end (the machine has four serial ports).

ly, Mensch said, the purpose of his new computer is not to live its life as an Apple II compatible. "We want to go forward, not back to the past," said Jihad Jaafar, the Nigerian programmer of most of the Mensch Computer's firmware. (That comment seemed to anger a few people, but I don't think it was meant to imply anything negative about the Apple II—Mensch and his team merely wanted to start with a clean slate, and design the best computer for the applications they had in mind without being constrained by the Apple II architecture.)

So what's the Mensch Computer for? Mensch envisions it as a platform for all sorts of home applications. With appropriate software, it would make a pretty nice Internet front end (the machine has four serial ports). It might also make a good phone book or recipe database. (If you've ever seen Seven Hills' *Shoobox* for the Apple IIGS, it's easy to imagine the Mensch Computer as a sort of "shoobox machine," an electronic household organizer for everything your typical family keeps in a shoobox in the closet.) It's small enough to

move from room to room, or even to take on the road as an electronic atlas. Each member of the family might have their own Flash RAM card containing the programs they use most and their own personal files.

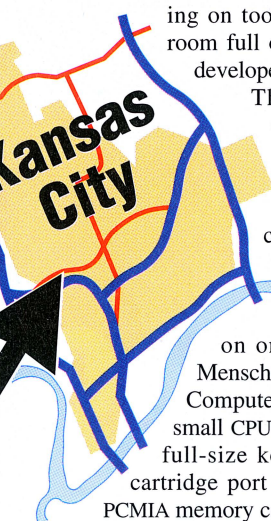
Will people buy it? Mensch's big thing is licensing. (The 65C02 processor, for example, is used in everything from personal organizers to pacemakers. While Mensch doesn't actually make these 65C02s, he does get a royalty for every unit sold, since the chip is his design.) Sanyo has already agreed to build Mensch Computers, and other companies are reportedly interested in licensing the technology to use in various home, portable, and consumer electronics applications. So while I think it's unlikely you'll ever go to the local Circuit City and pick up a Mensch Computer, you might well someday buy a television, or a telephone, or a car that has a Mensch Computer in it (although it might not actually bear the Mensch name). Since all of these devices will use the same architecture, you'll be able to exchange data—to pull a travel guide from your interactive TV, for example, store it on a Flash RAM card, and then use it in your car while you travel.

It's easy to envision the advantages of a standard platform for such applications. Programmers could do all their development on one machine, regardless of the eventual target audience. Peripherals and data would be interchangeable. It's particularly savvy of the coming communications boom—one of the computer's four serial ports is dedicated to connecting to other computers, with another dedicated to a modem.

Mensch didn't mention any specific applications in his session, but in talking with Jaafar briefly at the Mini-Expo on Saturday, I could tell that the Mensch Computer team is excited about the potential of the machine. Can it be successful? You've all seen the ads from AT&T promising that "You Will" someday be able to do all sorts of amazing things with technology, but they've been purposely vague about what kind of hardware will be doing the work—mainly because they have no idea what the actual technology will be. A lot of other companies are also dreaming big dreams about an interconnected world where everything is digitally controlled. When it comes time to turn the marketing into reality, these companies will look for solutions that are already available and just waiting to be tapped—like the Mensch Computer.

While Mensch's Western Design Center isn't exactly a household name, that hasn't stopped the 65C02 from becoming one of the most popular embedded controllers in the world. After all, the people who need to know who WDC is *do* know. The rest of us don't matter. Maybe, just maybe, we lucky few at KansasFest witnessed the birth of a new platform which will help make the "future visions" of AT&T and others a reality—and make them all compatible. Or maybe not. Time, as always, will be the judge. Developers should be able to buy Mensch Computers by the time you read this.

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What about that 32-bit version of the 65816? Mensch has the design partially completed, but until he has a customer who is actually interested in using the chip, it's going to stay that way. He mentioned that the only reason the chip exists even to that extent is that one of his licensees wanted, for competitive reasons, to be able to list a 32-bit processor in their product line. (Nobody has yet tried to order it.) In the embedded controller market, though, hardly anyone is using 32-bit technology—plain old 8-bit is by far the most popular.

Mac Attack

After lunch, the conference tracks split up again, with two sessions again running simultaneously. (We later discovered that the reason they'd been split in the morning, rejoined briefly for Mensch's session, then split again was that Randy Brandt was to have given the keynote address that morning, but Brandt had a last-minute situation that prevented him from arriving until later Thursday. Thus, his keynote had simply been swapped with the two sessions originally planned for Friday morning.)

While two members of the Western Design team demonstrated development tools for the Mensch Computer, I checked out the preview of Macintosh System 7.5 hosted by Mike Pruneau, a marketing representative from Apple's Kansas City office. Since this isn't a Macintosh magazine, I will refrain from telling you everything there is to know about System 7.5. The main new hot features are QuickDraw GX (a new graphics and printing architecture) and Apple Guide (an interactive help system that can actually show you what you're supposed to do). Apple has also bundled other components, previously available as part of System 7 Pro or as third-party extensions, into System 7.5. If you want to read more about it, go pick up *Macworld* or *MacUser*. Both of these magazines have recently featured in-depth explorations of the next Macintosh System release.

A couple of System 7.5's new features did, however, bring a few chuckles to the lips of the Apple II aficionados in attendance. System 7.5 now features a thermometer that fills in as the machine starts up—just like the IIGs. ("Took them long enough," a wag put in, prompting a wave of laughter.) The new Mac Find File desk accessory is also reminiscent of the IIGs Find File NDA. Pruneau laughed along with the audience—after all, he was able to look out across the crowd of Apple II nuts and see several PowerBook screens sticking up! It's been clear for years that Apple considered the Macintosh its future direction, and, for the most part, Apple II users have accepted that and no longer take it personally.

The code name displayed on the startup screen of the demo version of System 7.5 was "Capone." The notorious gangster Al Capone was also known as "the King of Chicago." And, by a strange coincidence, Microsoft Win-

dows 4's code name is "Chicago." It was a clever but subtle bit of code-name one-upmanship which, while largely unnoticed, was appreciated by those who caught it.

Amazing Three-Dimensions

After the Macintosh System 7.5 demonstration, I decided to see what was up with Animasia 3-D, the near-legendary IIGs 3-D animation program that Michael Lutynski has been working on for four years. (The competing session was a demonstration of Procyon's GNO/ME Unix-like operating system for the IIGs, curiously led not by Procyon's Jawaid Bazyar—who was in attendance—by by DigiSoft Innovations' Jim Maricondo.)

Animasia long ago passed the stage where it could be considered a mere "product" and became a true labor of love. After all, in today's IIGs market Lutynski is going to have difficulty selling enough copies of the \$99 program to recoup four years of work. Most people don't have as much persistence as he does. I hope the Apple II market supports him buy buying lots of copies of Animasia (hint, hint).

Having worked with the Lightwave 3-D software for the Video Toaster, I really appreciated Animasia's intuitive approach to modeling. Instead of creating objects in one application, then arranging the objects in another, as most 3-D programs require, Animasia lets you edit your objects right in the scene where they'll appear. The modeling tools are additive: that is, if you create a cube, then select a face of that cube and invoke the "cone" tool, a pyramid (a square cone) will jut out from the face of the cube. You can repeat this process ad infinitum to create really bizarre shapes. Other interesting tools include the one-click "doughnut" and "spiral" tools, along with a nifty tool that lets you extrude a shape along a path. Other aspects of the user interface, such as the way groups of objects are handled, convinced me that Animasia was probably the most user-friendly 3-D program I'd ever seen.

Due to the graphic limitations of the IIGs, the program's output basically consists of flat, colored polygons with a fixed palette. (The limited number of colors occasionally caused surface shadings to change abruptly as lighting shifted during the course of an animation.) Animations are rendered to a PaintWorks file using the IIGs "fill mode," which makes for compact animation files and smooth, flicker-free playback. Rendering can take anywhere from several seconds to several minutes per frame, depending on the number of polygons on the screen. The program uses optimized integer math rather than floating-point, but a 10 MHz or faster accelerator is recommended nonetheless.

Lutynski mentioned that he'd designed the user interface and the actual "gearwork" of the program to be completely separate entities. This will make porting the software to another platform simple—just write a new user interface, and re-compile the "3-D engine" (it's written mostly in C) for the new machine.

That's a good thing—Mac and Windows 3-D programs are all excessively complex (and expensive) for dabblers who just want to get their feet wet in 3-D animation. There's a definite market there, and I think that's where Lutynski will see his real payback. But we Apple IIGs users have the distinction of getting it first! The renderer, by the way, computes colors to 40 bits, which is more than enough for photo-realistic rendering on computers with 24-bit color.

The program lacks a few features (such as texture mapping and ray tracing) that more sophisticated 3-D programs have. But then, it doesn't cost \$800, either, and besides, the IIGs simply doesn't have the resolution or color palette to handle such detail, nor the CPU horsepower to render such complex images in any reasonable amount of time. Let's face it, nobody's going to create the next *Babylon 5* using Animasia on a IIGs—but it's a heck of a lot of fun, and an inexpensive way to learn about 3-D animation.

Lutynski reported that he was planning to write the manual in August and start shipping the program in September. Later in the session he mentioned that he wanted to optimize the program's code before shipping it to improve the speed. Frankly, unless he's a really fast writer or plans on including only skimpy documentation (which would be a shame—the program definitely needs a manual which will explain 3-D animation to complete novices), I think he's being overly optimistic. But, after a four-year wait, it looks like the IIGs world will finally have a solid, usable 3-D animation tool, I'd guess by the end of 1994. Keep your eyes open for more information.

And, at one meal in the Avila cafeteria, I overheard Lutynski and Roger Wagner discussing the potential of incorporating Animasia 3-D animations into HyperStudio. This is where deals are made, folks.

Thursday's Sessions Conclude

After the Animasia presentation, I went back to the other conference room to watch Apple Rep Mike Pruneau put the PowerMac through its paces. We have a PowerMac 6100 here at Quality, but I'd never seen an official Apple demo. As it turned out, most of the things Pruneau showed I'd already seen—such as the PlainTalk speech synthesis technology, the graphing calculator, and the Kai's Power Tools demo of real-time 3-D shading. I *hadn't* seen Adobe Photoshop 3.0 (code name: Tiger Mountain) running at blazing native speed on a PowerMac—but now I have. Wow. As I reported in this space not too long ago, the PowerPC chip has the sheer speed to do all sorts of things previously considered "impossible" for desktop computers. I came away impressed anew. (Meanwhile, Erick Wagner's conference in the other room, on interfacing outside devices to the Apple II, was also a good one, I heard.)

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The day's final sessions were Joe Kohn's "Looking Good In Print" and Greg Nelson's "Multimedia Authoring with CD-ROM." I already had a pretty good idea how to look good in print, I wasn't particularly interested in designing CD-ROMs, and most importantly of all, the previous night's lack of sleep was beginning to catch up with me. I went back to the dorms and caught an hour and a half worth of sleep before heading to that evening's celebrity roast. That was the plan, anyway.

The Night Life

Unfortunately I not only slept through the evening's buffet but also missed the beginning of the roast of Mike Westerfield, owner of the Byteworks and creator of the ORCA series of development tools. If the first half was as good as the second half, he was roasted quite thoroughly. To my stomach, however, the most important thing was Roger Wagner's announcement that he'd be buying pizza for all comers at midnight.

The dorms shortly became the focal point of activity. Each floor of the dorm had about twenty rooms and a central commons area. The second annual KansasFest "Bite the Bag" contest was held—since it's been held two years

in a row, I guess that makes it an official tradition. ("Bite the Bag" is a party game in which players take turns trying to pick up a paper grocery bag from the floor with their teeth. The catch is, only one part of the player's body may touch the ground during the "bite." When everyone in a round has succeeded or failed, a strip is torn off the top of the bag and another round begins. This game of balance and coordination becomes increasingly interesting as the late hour begins to take its toll.) Roger Wagner was this year's champion, his form demonstrating that he'd obviously spent many hours practicing. Eventually the pizza arrived, marking the end of the festivities.

All too soon, though, I found myself too tired to stand up. I somehow found my way back to my room and collapsed. And a few minutes later, it seemed, I awoke to find the sun rising on a Kansas City Friday morning.

A Good Friday

Friday's breakfast was rather more sparsely attended than Thursday's—just another sign (as if we needed one) that people were desperate for sleep. The day's sessions began with Randy Brandt's keynote address, titled "Confessions of a Primordial Programmer," a nostalgia speech recounting Brandt's past, the golden days of Beagle Bros, and the joys of working with Claris on AppleWorks 3.0. His

narrative was engrossing—but there's so much history in Brandt's experiences with the Apple II that the retelling took nearly the entire hour, leaving him barely enough time to announce AppleWorks 5, let alone demonstrate it.

AppleWorks 5 is the ultimate AppleWorks power-user upgrade. It will require a 3.5" drive and at least 256K RAM. While the final feature set hasn't been nailed down just yet, I did see Brandt demonstrating a much better version of the word processor's split-screen feature, and a database feature which allows a MouseText background to be designed for the data entry screen. The price for the upgrade hasn't been set as of this writing—AppleWorks 4 owners will probably receive an upgrade notice early in the fall.

Microsoft Invades KansasFest

After Brandt's speech, the conference once again split into two tracks. *II Alive* contributor Nathaniel Sloan talked about telecommunications scripting, but I'd wager most attendees opted for the sneak preview of Microsoft Windows 4.0, code-name Chicago. "Know your enemy" was justification enough for me. This session, hosted by Pat Wilson of Microsoft's St. Louis office, was to have required the signing of a non-disclosure agreement by atten-

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dees—but Wilson held up the business section of that day's Kansas City Star, which featured a front-page story on Windows 4, and explained, "When I saw this I decided not to bother with the non-disclosure agreements."

Windows 4 is probably the most important product in Microsoft's history. Freed of the legal constraints that kept them from directly copying Apple's design in the past, the Microsoft engineers were finally able to design the Windows they wanted without having to worry about whether it looked "too much" like the Macintosh. The result, predictably, *does* look a lot like a Macintosh (or a IIGs)—but in my opinion the resemblance is only skin deep. Windows 4 and the Apple Desktop are only similar enough to confuse people who have to use both on a regular basis. It's different enough from Windows 3 that those users, too, will have to relearn the way they use their computers. So no matter whether you're coming from the Mac or Windows 3, Windows 4 will take some getting used to. I suspect that, Microsoft being Microsoft, this won't delay the acceptance of Windows 4 very long. After all, what else is there?

Most of the things Windows 4 does are things the Mac and the IIGs have been doing along. The much-vaunted Task Bar, which displays all running programs at the bottom of the

screen, along with a pop-up menu for accessing applications and accessories, is basically just a combination of the Apple menu and the application menu. (Not necessarily inferior or superior—just an interesting alternative.) Windows 4 will automatically recognize new peripherals and load the appropriate drivers, a feature Microsoft calls "Plug and Play." It's a big deal to PC users, but the hullaboo is a mystery to Apple II and Mac users, who have been enjoying pretty much similar convenience for the past sixteen years. Windows' File Manager and Program Manager have been combined into a single Finder-like program. File sharing is built in (a feature that previously required running Windows for Workgroups).

All this isn't to imply that Windows 4 is completely derivative of Apple's efforts. There are a few features I saw in Windows 4 that I think Apple could learn a lesson or two from. First is the "briefcase," a feature which allows people to copy files from desktop PCs to their laptops for a trip, then automatically put the revised files in their proper places when they return. It's a part of the operating system now—and a feature that Apple, with all its emphasis on connectivity, seems to have missed. Second is the "Network Neighborhood," a special icon on the Windows desktop which, when opened, shows all the network servers you can connect to—a vast improvement over the Mac's aging Chooser or GS/OS's AppleShare control panel. Apple should, and

probably will, be taking a very close look at Windows 4 and adapting these and other features to future versions of its user interface.

But the feature I liked most is one we'll likely never see in an Apple product—because it requires a second mouse button, and Apple has always contended that a one-button mouse is "less confusing." In Windows 4, clicking the right mouse button displays a shortcut menu which offers only the options you can do to the object you're pointing at. If you're in Excel (a Windows spreadsheet program) and pointing at a worksheet cell, the right mouse button displays a menu of the things you can do to cells. (You can still do it the old fashioned way—click the left mouse button to select the cell, then use the menu bar—but this way is obviously much faster because it eliminates all the extraneous choices that don't have anything to do with cells.) If you point at a program on the Task Bar and click the right mouse button, you get a choice of the things you can do with programs—you can even quit a program this way without bringing it to the foreground. If you drag an icon with the right mouse button, a menu pops up asking whether you want to copy the file, move it, or make an alias of it. It's almost like having someone looking over your shoulder constantly offering you only the relevant choices. Apple should look into finding some way to add this kind of intelligence to its own system software.

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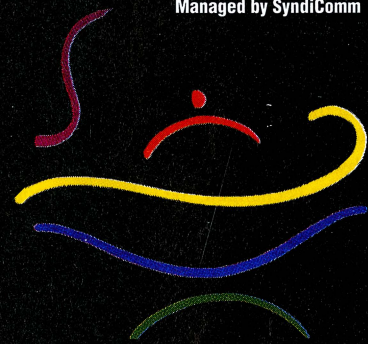
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A Tale of One City

(Continued from page 43)

Most of the attendees left from the Microsoft session thinking that Microsoft was playing catch-up with the Mac (true) but that they hadn't yet come close (debatable). I think Microsoft has done an excellent job of bringing most of the functionality of Macintosh System 7 to the PC-compatible world. There are a few rough edges, but there were also a few rough edges in the initial release of System 7. The trouble is that Apple has leapfrogged Microsoft with System 7.5—with new technologies like QuickDraw GX and Apple Guide, the built-in help system. By the time Microsoft comes out with the Windows NT equivalent of Windows 4, Apple will have System 8 and Open Doc. Still, while it's obvious Microsoft has learned a lot from Apple, it's also clear that Microsoft has a few tricks of its own. Competition of this sort almost always results in better products—and that will benefit both Apple Desktop and Windows users.

Time Flies When You're Having Fun

After lunch, I decided I needed some more sleep, so I went back to the dorm and napped through the following two sessions. On one track we had two separate sessions on Microsoft Office for Windows, and on the other track was Roger Wagner's "HyperStudio as a Development Environment," followed by Mike Westerfield's demonstration of the Byte-works' new IIGs spreadsheet, Quick Click Calc (which included a disclosure of the programming details of Westerfield's IIGs implementation of a "publish and subscribe" feature). While Roger Wagner is always interesting, I've seen him show HyperStudio plenty of times before.

I had a glimpse of Westerfield's spreadsheet later in the conference, and it looks like a great product. It's got a very friendly user interface, and also has a few unique capabilities (for example, the program understands letter grades, so teachers can easily average an A and a C and get a B, without having to use percentages). The graphing capabilities look complete, and then there's the publish and subscribe feature. What this means is that one spreadsheet can subscribe to another, and when the original spreadsheet is changed, the subscribing spreadsheet is updated to reflect the changes. If you're looking for a spreadsheet with a little more oomph (and a tad more stability) than the one in AppleWorks GS, Quick Click Calc is worth a look. Westerfield also told me that he plans to release other productivity titles under the "Quick Click" name.

While Bill Lynn demonstrated "Way Cool and Cheap Macintosh Utilities," former *inCider/A+* columnist Joe Kohn, now the publisher of Shareware Solutions II and self-described "Apple II Cheerleader," hosted a session on the Internet which was a logical follow-up to Jim Maricondo's introductory session the previous day. He began by stating that "all the

things Jim showed you are obsolete" thanks to a new Internet feature called the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web is a hypermedia system somewhat like HyperStudio (actually, since it's largely textual, it's more like Nexus)—except that where these programs link information that's all stored on one computer, the information referenced in a single Web document can be stored all over the world, in widely separated computer systems.

The Web can transmit graphics and sound as well as text. Apple II users will use a front end called Lynx, running on their dial-up system, to access the Web; there's also a full multimedia front end called Mosaic which runs on Macs, PCs, and Unix machines. The real power of the Web is that anyone can set up their own home page, reflecting their interests and personality. The last few months have seen an explosion in new Web material. The Kremlin even has a multimedia tour you can take via the Web. There's little doubt that this is, indeed, the future of the information highway.

The final sessions of KansasFest were Mike Westerfield's demonstration of 3D Logo, and GS+'s Joe Wankerl's session on Newton programming. I'd seen 3D Logo earlier, so I opted for the Newton session, even though I don't own a Newton. To program a Newton you need a Newton MessagePad (of course), a Macintosh, and an \$800 Newton Development Kit. You design your programs on the Mac, then download them to the Newton for testing. And "design" really is the correct word, because Newton programming is completely object-oriented and graphical in nature—you can create a simple "Hello World" program without writing a single line of NewtonScript code. I already considered the Newton a nifty gadget, but I found it even more nifty when I got some idea of how it works internally. It really is a revolutionary software architecture. It blows my mind that Apple spent so much time and effort developing the operating system of a \$600 executive toy. Even if the MessagePad proves itself a flop, the technology inside it will probably live on in other Apple products. It's that cool.

The wrap-up of Friday wouldn't be complete without a description of the Nerf War held that night. Mike Westerfield caught wind of rumors that several attendees were planning a sneak Nerf attack on the rest of us—and so led an expedition of four, including yours truly, to the nearby Wal-Mart HyperMart to gather ammunition for defense. The war was bigger than anyone would have suspected. During the course of the war there were three or four additional trips made to the HyperMart to stock up on Nerf missiles, balls, guns, and other weaponry. Unfortunately, I missed most of the fun. You see, the Nerf Warriors went to see a movie, which left the rest of us sitting around in the dorms waiting for everyone to come back. I was planning to start the long drive home the next day—and so by the time the wars began, I was asleep. But at least I had a five-piece semi-automatic foam dart bow and arrow set.

Thank God It's Saturday

Saturday found only a few of us alert enough to make breakfast in the Avila cafeteria. The Mini-Expo, with small exhibits from a number of companies, began at 10 AM. Tom Weishaar and company had brought several tables full of leftover goodies from Resource Central—classic software, old reference manuals, and so on. Other exhibitors included Western Design Center (I got to play with a Mensch Computer, and managed to lock it up within ten seconds by attempting to run the built-in Forth language—which wasn't installed in the machine yet), the Byte-works, Roger Wagner Publishing, and Sequential Systems.

One highlight of the Expo was seeing the new issue of PowerGS, a freeware disk magazine put together by Auri Rahimzadeh. The youthful Rahimzadeh frequently comes off as overzealous online, but when I saw the magazine, I was impressed. The graphics are uniformly excellent, and there's a lot of interesting and useful material for Apple IIGs owners. The articles seemed reasonably well-written. The first two issues had some rough edges, but the third one is a pleasure. Check it out if you have a IIGs—it's available for download from most online services.

Finally, though, it was time to say goodbye to all my old and new friends, pack up my car, and head out. I ended up stopping for the night in Greenville, Illinois at a small motel called the Two Acres. It had a Magic Fingers massage unit on the bed—a true find! (Of course I tried it. And of course it didn't work.)

I think I enjoyed this sixth KansasFest more than any previous, except for the first. The last few years, I've been a session leader, and making sure I was prepared to present my material had preoccupied me. This year, I was free to enjoy the conference without any pressure. With products like Quick Click Calc and Animasia being produced, I left feeling good about the Apple II—and excited anew about the new technology represented by the PowerPC, System 7.5, Windows 4, and the Mensch Computer. I'm looking forward to going next year! ■

What Mistakes?

Fate is apparently conspiring to keep Joe Kohn's name in these pages. Last issue we ran a correction due to the fact that we omitted the address for subscribing to Kohn's publication, *Shareware Solutions II*. Unfortunately, that correction contained an error. Any letters you may have sent to Joe at 155 Alpine Street probably have been making some long, strange trips. The correct address is:

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166 Alpine Street
San Rafael, CA 94901-1008